



H.R. 2707 – To reauthorize the Underground Railroad Educational and Cultural Program

Floor Situation

H.R. 2707 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Dennis Kucinich (D-OH) on June 13, 2007. The bill was reported to the Committee on Education and Labor but was not considered.

H.R. 2707 is scheduled to be considered on the floor on July 30, 2007.

Summary

H.R. 2707 directs the Secretary of Education to make grants to one or more nonprofit educational organizations that are established to research, display, interpret, and collect artifacts relating to the history of the Underground Railroad.

Each nonprofit educational organization awarded a grant under this bill must enter into an agreement with the Secretary of Education. Each agreement will require the organization to:

- Establish a facility to house, display, and interpret the artifacts related to the history of the Underground Railroad, and to make the interpretive efforts available to institutions of higher education that award a baccalaureate or graduate degree;
- Demonstrate substantial private support for the facility through the implementation of a public-private partnership between a State or local public entity and a private entity for the support of the facility, which private entity shall provide matching funds for the support of the facility in an amount equal to 4 times the amount of the contribution of the State or local public entity, except that not more than 20 percent of the matching funds may be provided by the Federal Government;
- Create an endowment to fund any and all shortfalls in the costs of the on-going operations of the facility;
- Establish a network of satellite centers throughout the United States to help disseminate information regarding the Underground Railroad throughout the United States, if such

satellite centers raise 80 percent of the funds required to establish the satellite centers from non-Federal public and private sources;

- Establish the capability to electronically link the facility with other local and regional facilities that have collections and programs which interpret the history of the Underground Railroad; and
- Submit, for each fiscal year for which the organization receives funding under this section, a report to the Secretary of Education that contains:
 - A description of the programs and activities supported by the funding;
 - The audited financial statement of the organization for the preceding fiscal year;
 - A plan for the programs and activities to be supported by the funding as the Secretary may require; and
 - An evaluation of the programs and activities supported by the funding as the Secretary may require.

The bill authorizes \$6,000,000 for fiscal year 2008, \$6,000,000 for fiscal year 2009, \$6,000,000 for fiscal year 2010, \$3,000,000 for fiscal year 2011, and \$3,000,000 for fiscal year 2012.

Background

The Underground Railroad Educational and Cultural Program provides grants to support research, exhibition, interpretation, and collection of artifacts related to the history of the Underground Railroad.

The Underground Railroad Educational and Cultural Program was established in the Higher Education Amendments Act of 1998 (PL 105-244). The Underground Railroad Educational and Cultural Program is authorized through FY2007.

Cost

The Congressional Budget Office has not scored this legislation.

Staff Contact

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